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## Ode

on the Stability of the British Empire, written  
on the Occasion of the Coronation of  
King Edward the Seventh  
by John Simpson

SIMPSON, JOHN

Ode on the stability...

Canadian  
pamphlets

# ODE

on the Stability of the British Empire, written  
on the Occasion of the Coronation of  
King Edward the Seventh.

By JOHN SIMPSON  
*Dunmore, Ont.*  
I.

The mists that hide the storied past uprise,  
A vision of ten centuries appears:

Three lines of kings appear before the eyes,  
That coalesce, and last a thousand years:  
Down through the ages to the present day,  
The triune line appears, and still has sway.

Three nations now are one,  
The strife of old is done;  
Awake the lyre, and sing the song of peace!  
The enmities of yore,  
Entomb for evermore;

Of ancient discord let there be surcease!

Although a thousand years have run their race,  
Since royal Alfred struggled with the Dane,  
A king who can from Alfred clearly trace  
His lineage doth now in England reign:  
The throne of England, having for its wall  
The full consent of freemen, cannot fall.

A hundred thrones are low,  
But it doth stronger grow;  
Ye sons of England, let your voices rise  
In thanks for Heaven's aid;  
Though realms arise and fade,  
The ancient realm of England never dies.

Ten centuries ago the Scottish throne,  
By monarchs, crowned upon the Lia-Fail,  
Was held; and soon, around the ancient Stone  
Assembled, will the Scottish leaders hail  
A king, whose line come down from days of old,  
A thousand years the Scottish throne has held.  
The king descent can trace  
From Scotland's royal race;

The blood of Robert Bruce is in his veins:  
The Scottish pipes bring forth,  
Ye Britons of the North,  
And rouse again the ancient Scottish strains.

At Tara, in the famous days of old,  
Ere Scotland saw the mystic Stone of Fate,  
The kings of Ireland, girt with heroes bold,  
Were crowned upon it wth befitting state:  
King Edward's sires their shields at Tara bore,  
And Irish bards their prowess sang of yore.  
Ye sons of Ireland raise  
Your voices loud in praise;  
Bring forth the harp, as did your sires renowned:  
Attune the vibrant strings,  
A son of Irciand's kings  
Upon the Lia-Fail is to be crowned.

In England, Scotland, Ireland, ancient days  
Have vanished; but a living link exists,  
That binds them to the present, and the gaze  
Doth carry backward through the ancient mists:  
Through thirty generations handed down,  
The stock of Alfred still doth wear the crown;  
To ancient feuds a truce,  
The lines of Robert Bruce  
And Edward now are blended into one;  
The harp of Ireland sound,  
A king is to be crowned  
Of Ireland's royal line, and strife is done.

## II.

Chaldea, Persia, Greece and Rome,  
The greatest empires of the past,  
Were evanescent, like the foam  
That lives a moment with the blast;  
They bowed their heads at Ruin's call,  
And feebly tottered to their fall;  
The homes of bats and owls were all  
Their palaces at last.

They could not live; their corner-stones  
Were wars that freeborn men enslaved:  
They could not live; with human bones

Their paths of triumph all were paved:  
Their cities were the work of slaves,  
Their thrones were built o'er yawning graves;  
They rose, then vanished, like the waves  
That on their borders raved.

But freedom is the corner-stone  
On which the British Empire stands:  
What though it oft doth stand alone?  
It is not built on shifting sands,  
But on the rock of freemen's choice:  
The humblest in it hear the voice  
Of Justice cheer them, and rejoice  
Within its many lands.

Though scattered, all its lands are one,  
The British flag floats over all;  
And never be the bond undone  
That binds them, lest they, sundered, fall:  
The British Empire doth embrace  
A fourth of all the human race;  
Its nations, linked, can dangers face,  
And none can them appall.

The throne alone doth make them one,  
And British unity defend;  
They know it must not be undone,  
And to the Coronation send  
Their noblest sons: in bright array,  
Around the throne, united they  
Are marshalled now, the Empire's stay,  
On which it doth depend.

The men who love the Maple Leaf,  
And on Canadian plains abide,  
Have left for Africa the sheaf  
And herd, to check invasion's tide:  
They love all measures lenitive,  
Esteem the Boer, and fain would give  
Him equal rights with all who live  
In Britain's empire wide.

The men who love the Southern Cross,  
The emblem of their sea-girt land;  
And on their shields its stars emboss,

Around the British banner stand.  
New Zealand, that would fain restore  
The Golden Age, doth war deplore,  
Yet sends her legions more and more  
To Afric's stricken strand.

From Africa come sounds of war;  
The beating of the martial drum  
Is heard; the bugle sounds afar;  
But good will from confusion come:  
The Boer will yet, with joyous pride,  
Beneath the British flag abide,  
And onward march with mighty stride,  
When war's dread voice is dumb.

The British flag doth freely wave  
In India, and doth millions there  
From fell invasion's horrors save,  
And sure protection to them bear.  
Egyptian toilers love to see  
The flag that gave them liberty:  
A thousand islands, full of glee,  
Their loyalty declare.

The mighty ocean doth attest  
The boundless range of Britain's sphere  
Of action; for, upon its breast,  
Her flag doth everywhere appear.  
As stars the sky, that flag the sea  
Bedecks; the emblem of the free  
It is; to all who liberty  
Uphold, it is most dear.

Our country's present and its past  
Are through the throne together bound;  
No other bond was formed to last:  
In ruins now upon the ground  
Are lying castles, abbeys, walls,  
Till scarce a mark their site recalls;  
The self-same line in royal halls  
A thousand years is found.

That line has late received within  
Its ranks a queen, whose presence bright  
The homage of all hearts doth win,

Who fills the royal home with light.  
The Dane, King Alfred's deadly foe,  
Has added to his line a glow  
Of sunshine: strifes of long ago  
From earth have taken flight.

### III.

Eight hundred years have vanished since the day,  
When William, girt with Norman knights, was crowned  
With splendor at Westminster, yet the gray  
Old walls will soon re-echo with the sound  
Of loyal cheers in honour of a king  
Who traces from him lineal descent,  
Whose Norman blood is with the Saxon blent,  
And Celtic, and to whom traditions cling  
That fill the British heart with feelings deep:  
All English kings since William have been there  
Invested with the crown; the tranquil air  
Has oft resounded with the trumpet's blare:  
The trumpet's sound around the Abbey sweep  
Once more, and rouse the ancient echoes from  
their sleep.

Eight hundred years! What food for earnest thought  
To every British mind this record brings!  
How wondrous is it that the selfsame spot  
Has seen so long the selfsame line of kings  
Receive the crown! Stability must be  
The leading feature of the British race:  
The ravages of ages, that efface  
All ancient landmarks, from their dread decree  
Of ruin, have the British royal line  
Exempted: it doth bind together all  
The scattered British nations and recall  
The past, and may no evil on it fall:  
A thousand years their proud traditions twine  
Around the British throne, and save it from decline.

What wondrous visiens throng upon the eyes,  
When gazing on Westminster's hoary walls!  
The bold Crusaders from their graves arise;  
Again the shout, "Long live King Richard!" falls  
Upon the ear within the storied fane;  
King Edward, who at Crecy raised on high

The red cross of old England, there doth lie;  
King Henry, who at Agincourt amain  
Upon the hosts of France triumphant rushed,  
And through her ranks with England's bravest  
pressed,  
Within Westminster long has lain at rest;  
Elizabeth, who stifled in her breast  
Compassion, and unhappy Mary crushed,  
Is lying there beside her, both their voices hushed.

The place is sacred! There doth lie the dust  
Of bards by whom the nation's deeds were sung:  
The place is sacred! Men who won the trust  
Of England, and her cause with burning tongue  
Espoused, are lying there. The honoured dead  
Of all the British realm are there interred:  
Their tongues are silent, but they still are heard;  
Though low at rest doth lie each sleeping head,  
Their words the souls of millions still inspire:  
They tread the earth no longer, but their clear,  
Heart-stirring voices countless thousands hear;  
Their souls are with us; still their thoughts career  
Throughout the earth, as when, with thoughts on fire,  
They struck inspiring notes upon their country's lyre.

Within Westminster, as in ages past,  
Are gathering the leaders of our race;  
From all the wide-spread nations that the vast  
And mighty British Empire doth embrace,  
Come leaders of the people to behold  
The monarch crowned, as, for a thousand years,  
Has been the wont of England's loyal peers.  
As was King David, in the days of old,  
Anointed, so does every British king  
Receive anointment: centuries have gone  
Since England's ancient crown was placed upon  
King Edward the Confessor; yet anon  
The selfsame rites will to the present bring  
The past. O British race, thou art no fickle thing!

Ye British nations, Heaven glorify!  
Exalt your voices fervently in praise!  
The lot of earthly things is but to die,  
And naught but Heaven's power ever stays  
The hand of dread Destruction in its course;

The earth is Heaven's footstool, and the might  
Of earthly nations shrivels, when the blight  
    Of Heaven's wrath doth touch them with its force.  
The British Empire, to continue, must  
    To Heaven give the glory, not to man:  
        All ancient empires fell beneath the ban  
            Of Heaven, and their courses quickly ran:  
The British Empire must in Heaven trust,  
Or, like proud Babylon, be levelled with the dust.

#### IV.

Ye Britons, wake your country's lyre!  
    Evoke sweet music from the strings!  
May strains of joy your hearts inspire!  
    Your paeans rise on soaring wings!  
From every sea, from every zone,  
    Come forward with deep loyalty!  
The proud and ancient British throne,  
    Begird with Britain's chivalry!  
    Hail! Hail! Hail! Britannia!  
Mother of a virile brood,  
    Who will from all ills protect thee,  
Grateful for thy motherhood.

A thousand years that throne has stood,  
    Unshaken by the jars of time,  
And now a mighty brotherhood  
    Of nations, with a faith sublime,  
Around it stands, a wall august,  
    That doth its permanence secure;  
The thrones of old are in the dust,  
    The British throne doth yet endure.  
    Hail! Hail! Hail! Britannia!  
Wreaths unfading deck thy brow;  
    Though a thousand years existent,  
In the pride of youth art thou.

The sun surveys our planet's track,  
    Flag after flag his vision flees;  
But in his sight the Union Jack  
    Doth ever float upon the breeze.  
Land after land his rays adorn,  
    And each the robe of night doth wear  
In turn; but it is ever morn

On British soil, his constant care.  
Hail! Hail! Hail! Britannia!  
Living long, but ever young;  
On the waters of all oceans  
To the breeze thy flag is flung.

The earth around the sun careers,  
Its sounds commingled sunward float;  
Amid them all he ever hears  
The British bugle's thrilling note.  
Each land, in turn, doth greet his light  
At daybreak with the beat of drum;  
The British drum-beat has no night,  
Its echoes to him ever come.  
Hail! Hail! Hail! Britannia!  
Thou art in the front of time;  
And the sunlight sheds its glory  
On thy sons in every clime.

May Britain's children never weep  
Beside their fallen country's grave!  
May British songs of gladness sweep  
Around the earth, a swelling wave!  
A host of loyal Britons now  
Their king with joyous greetings hail:  
Long live the crown upon his brow,  
And never may its glory pale!  
Hail! Hail! Hail! Britannia!  
May composure mark thy mien;  
'Mid the tumults of the nations,  
May thou ever sit serene.

All hail the glad, auspicious day  
That marks King Edward's budding reign!  
All hail the light of freedom's ray  
That gladdens Britain's vast domain!  
From peaceful lands, from smiling seas  
Deep orisons to Heaven rise!  
A million anthems lade the breeze,  
And sweep in concert to the skies.  
Hail! Hail! Hail! Britannia!  
Glorify the Lord of Hosts;  
Every nation falls in ruin,  
That its own achievement boasts.

